

*The Middle Ground*

Provo Valley's first settlement was hardly a summer old before vigorous pioneers had moved into outlying areas and laid the foundations for other community developments.

One of the significant developments that began in the summer of 1859 was along Snake Creek in the northwest part of the valley. Though no centralized settlements were made at first, such pioneers as Jesse McCarroll, Benjamin Mark Smith and Sidney Harmon Epperson began building homes along the creek.

They chose the location because of its warmth and beauty. Warm springs that abounded in the locale made the soil highly productive. Being near the base of the Wasatch Mountains and in view of majestic Mt. Timpanogos, the settlers felt the peace, beauty and strength of the hills.

During that first summer a crop of grain was planted in the choice lands along Snake Creek by McCarroll, Smith and Epperson along with Jeremiah Robey, David Wood and Edwin Bronson.

The crop was successful and it stimulated the building of more permanent cabins and corrals along the creek. There were four families that spent the winter of 1859-60 along Snake Creek.

As Spring arrived in 1860 so did an influx of new settlers for the Snake Creek area. There were soon enough families for two community areas, which became known as the upper and lower settlements.

The upper settlement was situated on both sides of Snake Creek, immediately below the junction of that stream with White Pine Creek. This is about two miles above the present site of Midway. Because of the numerous limestone formations found in the area, this settlement soon became known as Mound City. Some of the first settlers were Peter Shirts, John and Ephraim Hanks and a Mr. Riggs.

The lower Snake Creek settlement was about a mile and a half south of the present city of Midway. Though it was settled first it remained the smaller of the two settlements.

Growth of the two Snake Creek communities continued slowly, but by 1861 there were many new settlers from the Provo and American Fork areas who had decided to establish homes along the creek. Most of them chose the upper settlement, which grew to be the largest. However, it was in the lower settlement that John H. Van Wagoner chose to build the first flour grist mill in Provo Valley. Even though the mill

541

*1st Grist Mill  
in Provo River Valley*

was crude it was still another step forward in making the new valley more livable.

The time of planting and harvesting in 1861 came and went and the snows of another winter fell on more than 50 families who comprised the Snake River settlements. Then as the summer of 1862 arrived there was sufficient community spirit between the two groups that the first meeting house in the area was constructed. It was built of logs with a dirt roof and floor and was erected in the upper settlement, or Mound City. It was completed in time for the July 24th celebration. As it was nearing completion, the Presiding Bishop of the valley, Joseph S. Murdock of Heber, appointed Sidney Harmon Epperson to be presiding elder of the upper settlement. The lower settlement of more than 20 families was designated as a teacher's district of the upper settlement.

Elder Epperson was sustained in a meeting on June 26, 1862. He chose as his counselors John Fausett and Samuel Thompson. His calling as presiding elder proved him to be a man of faith and courage. He felt the responsibility of leadership and strove for unity among his people.

Side by side he worked with them in grubbing willows and sage brush, breaking land and making irrigation ditches, constructing roads, digging dugways to the canyons for fire wood, blasting rock and bridging streams.

Pioneering for the early Snake Creek settlers was a full-time job, 24 hours every day. However, by 1866 the lives of the people were further complicated with Indian problems. Restless red-men resented the encroachment by white men on their favorite hunting and trapping grounds, and often threatened the security of the new settlers. So, early in 1866 plans were made to abandon the rambling settlements along Snake Creek.

The axiom that there is "strength in numbers" and the wisdom of compromise are probably the two most important factors underlying the establishment of Midway, the thriving community that grew out of the two Snake Creek settlements.

The Indian troubles of 1866 made the settlers and leaders aware that the sprawling Snake Creek settlements would be highly vulnerable to the type of attacks being used by the Indians.

So it was that the upper and lower settlements on Snake Creek were advised to come together as one community. Tradition has it, however, that a warm contest ensued as to which community should join which. Each saw the virtue of their own position and desired not to move. However, a compromise location was chosen half way between the two settlements, and the new site was called, appropriately enough, Midway.

The first step in laying out the new settlement was a survey of the area. With Sidney H. Epperson and John Huber carrying the tapes and Mark Smith and Attewell Wootton Sr., the pegs, the city of Mid-

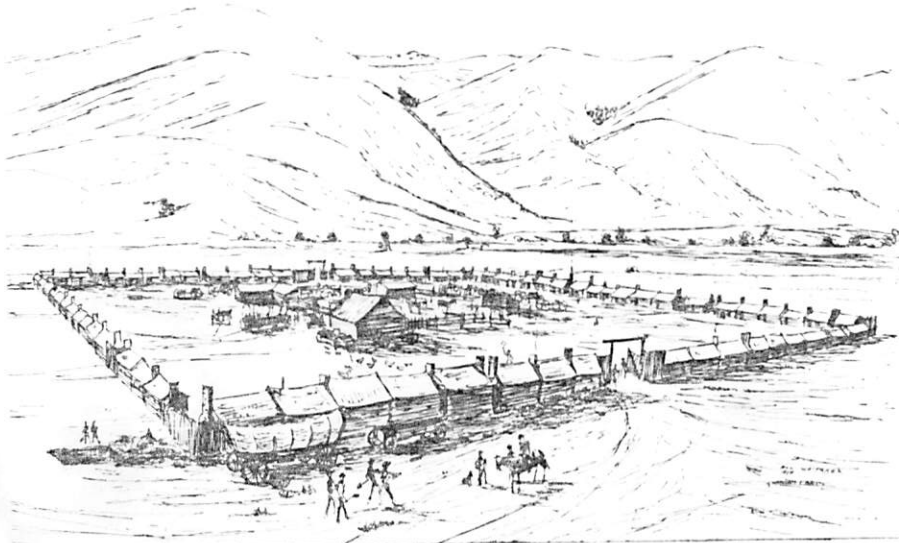
way was soon laid out with a public square in the center and ample city blocks surrounding the square.

Then began the work of "forting in." Around the central square some 75 primitive dirt-roofed log cabins sprang into existence, some abutting against each other, while between others were erected strong panels of upright posts. In this manner an impregnable wall was formed around the square. Small windows were provided at strategic points to serve as portholes in case of attack. Life in the new fort-string was conducted under military law, with officers and picket patrols acting at the call of the bugler, John Watkins.

Fort Midway brought to the people a sense of well provided security, and by bringing them close together helped develop a new happiness and community spirit. Fortunately, the fort was never attacked, though the settlers were ready to defend their lives and homes at any time. The fact that the fort was not molested speaks highly of the ability of the pioneers to cooperate in community projects.

The first 75 families in the old fort and their locations are as follows:

From the southwest to the northwest corner: Sidney H. Epperson, Jeremiah Robey, J. A. Robey, Simon Higgenbotham, George Snyder, Thomas Ritter, Edwin Bronson, Samuel Thompson, Ira Jacobs, Washington Clift, Moroni Blood, John Huber, John Wintsch, George Dabling.



An artist's sketch by Bill Whitaker depicting the establishment of Fort Midway in 1866.

## GRIST MILLS

Milling was one of the first industries in the Midway area, having its beginning in 1861 when John H. Van Wagoner built the first mill on the old Wood's Farm, known as the Fred Price home site.

The enterprising Mr. Van Wagoner had only been in Midway for about a year when he sensed the need of the people for a mill. He brought the first mill stone to the town by ox team and shaped the stone with hammer and chisel.

Sidney Epperson records in his journal the delight of the people with Mr. Van Wagoner's mill. After stating that the people could now have flour ground, and grain prepared for their cattle, Mr. Epperson wrote "This mill was indeed a blessing for the settlers."

In recent years the stone from this first mill has been placed atop a monument on the Post Office corner by the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers.

Early millers of Midway included George Bonner, James Ross, a Mr. Saxey, Brigham Mulliner, Hyrum Horner Dennis, Mark Jeffs and Mr. John Van Wagoner.

The major mill in Midway had its beginnings in 1893 when Mark Jeffs built a large, four-story grist mill on the east side of Midway near the Provo River. This mill was capable of producing 50 barrels of flour every 24 hours. Water from Provo River powered the mill, which was the first roller mill in the county. An additional source of water was the Birkumshaw Springs, about a mile and a half above the mill. Water was stored in a large pond overnight and then used as desired during the day.

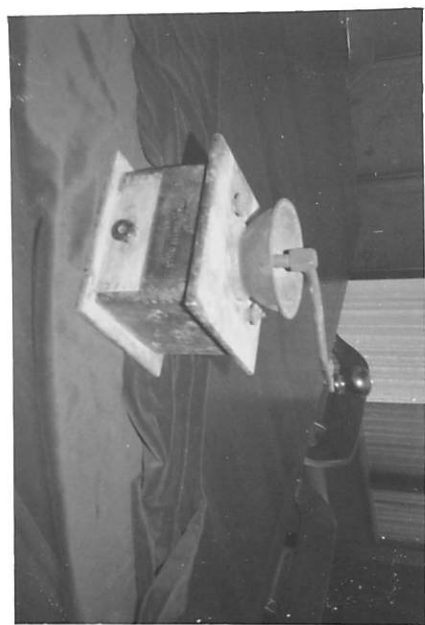
Because Mr. Jeffs hired transient millers to operate his mill, the venture failed to succeed and was closed in 1900.

However, Nels Joseph Johnson, a young miller, and native of Wasatch County, purchased the mill in 1903 and started operating it again. Mr. Johnson had been working for Abram Hatch in the Heber Flour Mills, but moved his wife and family to Midway as soon as he purchased the mill. He is reported to have paid Mr. Jeffs \$10,000 for the facility.

Through the years the mill has been successfully managed by Mr. Johnson and his sons. During World War I it ran at full capacity producing flour for the government. Most of this production was shipped to Houston, Texas. Flour was also shipped to San Francisco during the tragic earthquake of 1906.

Improvements made at the mill during the years included cleaning machines for the wheat, chopping facilities and flour bleaching equipment. Hundreds of tons of wheat were also stored in the mill.

For many years the mill was operated under the name of Peoples Roller Mills, and then later the Johnson Milling Company. When Mr. Johnson died in 1950, his son, Ralph J. Johnson took over the management. The mill is now the property of the Lifferth Manufacturing Co. It is under the management of Henry Lifferth. The company makes small metal tools.



Joseph







Crist Mill Stone  
on Town Square  
Midway

## HISTORICAL POINTS OF INTEREST IN MIDWAY

*Recorded by Reed Kohler about 1955 or 56  
At the home of George W. Johnson*



*The Mill Stone on the D.U.P. Monument*

### THE MILL STONE OF THE D.U.P MONUMENT

The Daughters of the Pioneer Monument is on the northeast corner of the public square. A large round stone topping the monument is of interest. If you notice it is carved out for the purpose of grinding flour and had a companion stone which in the years past was broken. It was located in its years of service, down in the Old Mill Lane on Snake Creek where it helped to grind the flour for the early settlers of Midway. I've been told by people who look at it that much of the stone must have ground off into the flour at times, and I tell the people on the tour that is one reason why the pioneers had so much grit.

---

### GRIST MILLS

Milling was one of the first industries in the Midway area, having its beginning in 1861 when John H. Van Wagoner built the first mill on the old Wood's Farm, known as the Fred Price home site.

The enterprising Mr. Van Wagoner had only been in Midway for about a year when he sensed the need of the people for a mill. He brought the first mill stone to the town by ox team and shaped the stone with hammer and chisel.

Sidney Epperson records in his journal the delight of the people with Mr. Van Wagoner's mill. After stating that the people could now have flour ground, and grain prepared for their cattle, Mr. Epperson wrote "This mill was indeed a blessing for the settlers."

In recent years the stone from this first mill has been placed atop a monument on the Post Office corner by the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers. 574





settlement, of course, was at Heber City, but there were also two small settlements along the Snake Creek, a number of families at Center Creek, some at Charleston, some in Round Valley or Wallsburg, a small cluster of houses at the Sessions spring and a few at a sheep ranch of Melvin Ross, afterwards known as Hailstone's Ranch, about eight miles north of Heber.

The first county road was established on March 3, 1862, and commenced at the Provo River below Manning's (southwest of the town of Charleston) and ran in a northerly direction following the old immigrant trail through the valley, passing by Melvin Ross' ranch and terminating at the northern boundary of the county known then as the Ross Summit.

Another county road was established April 26, 1862 and ran between Heber City and Center Creek and on to a sawmill in Center Creek Canyon.

Four school districts were also designated in April, 1862. They were district No. 1 to include Heber City; No. 2 at the Center Creek settlement; No. 3, the lower settlement on Snake Creek and No. 4 the upper Snake Creek settlement.

The first valuation of property for the county took place in 1862, and according to the report of John Harvey, assessor and collector, the property value in the valley was \$48,350.

Spring came late in 1862 and it was May 4 before any plowing could be done in the valley. The Church leaders who went to Salt Lake City for general conference sessions in April had to travel on snowshoes to get through the more than four feet of snow still on the ground.

Early in 1862 John H. Van Wagoner finished building a gristmill at Snake Creek's lower settlement. Even though there was no way to separate the smut from the wheat and some of the flour made was very dark, the people were still glad for this added improvement. At times that year the river was so high people couldn't get across to the mill. However, Henry McMullin, a ship builder from Maine, built a boat and the grist was taken back and forth on the boat. It was this same Mr. McMullin that built the first sawmill in the valley. It was owned by William M. Wall and James Adams and located in Center Creek Canyon.

Until the sawmill was built, people had used hand-prepared timber for all their furniture and other needs. Now with cut lumber available the rough furniture was quickly discarded.

Many of the people were able to obtain good wagons from the soldiers in Johnston's Army. The army had camped near Utah Lake until the outbreak of the Civil War in the East. They were summoned to return to the Northern Army's camps and so they sold some of their wagons and their supplies very cheaply rather than carry them back east. Many in Wasatch County obtained the wagons as the troops passed through the valley on their eastern trip.

settlement, of course, was at Heber City, but there were also two small settlements along the Snake Creek, a number of families at Center Creek, some at Charleston, some in Round Valley or Wallsburg, a small cluster of houses at the Sessions spring and a few at a sheep ranch of Melvin Ross, afterwards known as Hailstone's Ranch, about eight miles north of Heber.

The first county road was established on March 3, 1862, and commenced at the Provo River below Manning's (southwest of the town of Charleston) and ran in a northerly direction following the old immigrant trail through the valley, passing by Melvin Ross' ranch and terminating at the northern boundary of the county known then as the Ross Summit.

Another county road was established April 26, 1862 and ran between Heber City and Center Creek and on to a sawmill in Center Creek Canyon.

Four school districts were also designated in April, 1862. They were district No. 1 to include Heber City; No. 2 at the Center Creek settlement; No. 3, the lower settlement on Snake Creek and No. 4 the upper Snake Creek settlement.

The first valuation of property for the county took place in 1862, and according to the report of John Harvey, assessor and collector, the property value in the valley was \$48,350.

Spring came late in 1862 and it was May 4 before any plowing could be done in the valley. The Church leaders who went to Salt Lake City for general conference sessions in April had to travel on snowshoes to get through the more than four feet of snow still on the ground.

Early in 1862 John H. Van Wagoner finished building a gristmill at Snake Creek's lower settlement. Even though there was no way to separate the smut from the wheat and some of the flour made was very dark, the people were still glad for this added improvement. At times that year the river was so high people couldn't get across to the mill. However, Henry McMullin, a ship builder from Maine, built a boat and the grist was taken back and forth on the boat. It was this same Mr. McMullin that built the first sawmill in the valley. It was owned by William M. Wall and James Adams and located in Center Creek Canyon.

Until the sawmill was built, people had used hand-prepared timber for all their furniture and other needs. Now with cut lumber available the rough furniture was quickly discarded.

Many of the people were able to obtain good wagons from the soldiers in Johnston's Army. The army had camped near Utah Lake until the outbreak of the Civil War in the East. They were summoned to return to the Northern Army's camps and so they sold some of their wagons and their supplies very cheaply rather than carry them back east. Many in Wasatch County obtained the wagons as the troops passed through the valley on their eastern trip.

Community life was well developed by 1862 and the seeds of prosperity and growth planted so well by the early settlers in 1859 were already beginning to bear fruit. Living was difficult, but in overcoming privation and hardship these pioneers found a peace and contentment unequalled even in the modern world of conveniences and super-civilization.

Milling was one of the first industries in the Midway area, having its beginning in 1861 when John H. Van Wagoner built the first mill on the old Wood's Farm, known as the Fred Price home site.

The enterprising Mr. Van Wagoner had only been in Midway for about a year when he sensed the need of the people for a mill. He brought the first mill stone to the town by ox team and shaped the stone with hammer and chisel.

Sidney Epperson records in his journal the delight of the people with Mr. Van Wagoner's mill. After stating that the people could now have flour ground, and grain prepared for their cattle, Mr. Epperson wrote "This mill was indeed a blessing for the settlers."

In recent years the stone from this first mill has been placed atop a monument on the Post Office corner by the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers.

Early millers of Midway included George Bonner, James Ross, a Mr. Saxey, Brigham Mulliner, Hyrum Horner Dennis, Mark Jeffs and Mr. John Van Wagoner.

The major mill in Midway had its beginnings in 1893 when Mark Jeffs built a large, four-story grist mill on the east side of Midway near the Provo River. This mill was capable of producing 50 barrels of flour every 24 hours. Water from Provo River powered the mill, which was the first roller mill in the county. An additional source of water was the Birkumshaw Springs, about a mile and a half above the mill. Water was stored in a large pond overnight and then used as desired during the day.

Because Mr. Jeffs hired transient millers to operate his mill, the venture failed to succeed and was closed in 1900.

However, Nels Joseph Johnson, a young miller, and native of Wasatch County, purchased the mill in 1903 and started operating it again. Mr. Johnson had been working for Abram Hatch in the Heber Flour Mills, but moved his wife and family to Midway as soon as he purchased the mill. He is reported to have paid Mr. Jeffs \$10,000 for the facility.

576

"QW BEAUTIFUL UPON THE MOUNTAINS

Through the years the mill has been successfully managed by Mr. Johnson and his sons. During World War I it ran at full capacity producing flour for the government. Most of this production was shipped to Houston, Texas. Flour was also shipped to San Francisco during the tragic earthquake of 1906.

Improvements made at the mill during the years included cleaning machines for the wheat, chopping facilities and flour bleaching equipment. Hundreds of tons of wheat were also stored in the mill.

For many years the mill was operated under the name of Peoples Roller Mills, and then later the Johnson Milling Company. When Mr. Johnson died in 1950, his son, Ralph J. Johnson took over the management. The mill is now the property of the Lifferth Manufacturing Co. It is under the management of Henry Lifferth. The company makes small metal tools.

Milling was one of the first industries in the Midway area, having its beginning in 1861 when John H. Van Wagoner built the first mill on the old Wood's Farm, known as the Fred Price home site.

The enterprising Mr. Van Wagoner had only been in Midway for about a year when he sensed the need of the people for a mill. He brought the first mill stone to the town by ox team and shaped the stone with hammer and chisel.

Sidney Epperson records in his journal the delight of the people with Mr. Van Wagoner's mill. After stating that the people could now have flour ground, and grain prepared for their cattle, Mr. Epperson wrote "This mill was indeed a blessing for the settlers."

In recent years the stone from this first mill has been placed atop a monument on the Post Office corner by the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers.

Early millers of Midway included George Bonner, James Ross, a Mr. Saxey, Brigham Mulliner, Hyrum Horner Dennis, Mark Jeffs and Mr. John Van Wagoner.

The major mill in Midway had its beginnings in 1893 when Mark Jeffs built a large, four-story grist mill on the east side of Midway near the Provo River. This mill was capable of producing 50 barrels of flour every 24 hours. Water from Provo River powered the mill, which was the first roller mill in the county. An additional source of water was the Birkumshaw Springs, about a mile and a half above the mill. Water was stored in a large pond overnight and then used as desired during the day.

Because Mr. Jeffs hired transient millers to operate his mill, the venture failed to succeed and was closed in 1900.

However, Nels Joseph Johnson, a young miller, and native of Wasatch County, purchased the mill in 1903 and started operating it again. Mr. Johnson had been working for Abram Hatch in the Heber Flour Mills, but moved his wife and family to Midway as soon as he purchased the mill. He is reported to have paid Mr. Jeffs \$10,000 for the facility.

576

"QW BEAUTIFUL UPON THE MOUNTAINS

Through the years the mill has been successfully managed by Mr. Johnson and his sons. During World War I it ran at full capacity producing flour for the government. Most of this production was shipped to Houston, Texas. Flour was also shipped to San Francisco during the tragic earthquake of 1906.

Improvements made at the mill during the years included cleaning machines for the wheat, chopping facilities and flour bleaching equipment. Hundreds of tons of wheat were also stored in the mill.

For many years the mill was operated under the name of Peoples Roller Mills, and then later the Johnson Milling Company. When Mr. Johnson died in 1950, his son, Ralph J. Johnson took over the management. The mill is now the property of the Lifferth Manufacturing Co. It is under the management of Henry Lifferth. The company makes small metal tools.



Milling was one of the first industries in the Midway area, having its beginning in 1861 when John H. Van Wagoner built the first mill on the old Wood's Farm, known as the Fred Price home site.

The enterprising Mr. Van Wagoner had only been in Midway for about a year when he sensed the need of the people for a mill. He brought the first mill stone to the town by ox team and shaped the stone with hammer and chisel.

Sidney Epperson records in his journal the delight of the people with Mr. Van Wagoner's mill. After stating that the people could now have flour ground, and grain prepared for their cattle, Mr. Epperson wrote "This mill was indeed a blessing for the settlers."

In recent years the stone from this first mill has been placed atop a monument on the Post Office corner by the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers.

Early millers of Midway included George Bonner, James Ross, a Mr. Saxey, Brigham Mulliner, Hyrum Horner Dennis, Mark Jeffs and Mr. John Van Wagoner.

The major mill in Midway had its beginnings in 1893 when Mark Jeffs built a large, four-story grist mill on the east side of Midway near the Provo River. This mill was capable of producing 50 barrels of flour every 24 hours. Water from Provo River powered the mill, which was the first roller mill in the county. An additional source of water was the Birkumshaw Springs, about a mile and a half above the mill. Water was stored in a large pond overnight and then used as desired during the day.

Because Mr. Jeffs hired transient millers to operate his mill, the venture failed to succeed and was closed in 1900.

However, Nels Joseph Johnson, a young miller, and native of Wasatch County, purchased the mill in 1903 and started operating it again. Mr. Johnson had been working for Abram Hatch in the Heber Flour Mills, but moved his wife and family to Midway as soon as he purchased the mill. He is reported to have paid Mr. Jeffs \$10,000 for the facility.

575

576

"QW BEAUTIFUL UPON THE MOUNTAINS

Through the years the mill has been successfully managed by Mr. Johnson and his sons. During World War I it ran at full capacity producing flour for the government. Most of this production was shipped to Houston, Texas. Flour was also shipped to San Francisco during the tragic earthquake of 1906.

Improvements made at the mill during the years included cleaning machines for the wheat, chopping facilities and flour bleaching equipment. Hundreds of tons of wheat were also stored in the mill.

For many years the mill was operated under the name of Peoples Roller Mills, and then later the Johnson Milling Company. When Mr. Johnson died in 1950, his son, Ralph J. Johnson took over the management. The mill is now the property of the Lifferth Manufacturing Co. It is under the management of Henry Lifferth. The company makes small metal tools



## JOHN HALMAH VAN WAGONER JR. AND CLARISSA TAPPEN VAN WAGONER



Son of Halmah I. Van Wagoner and Mary Van Houten Van Wagoner.

Born September 1, 1811, at Wanague, New Jersey.

Married Eliza Smith  
Married Clarissa Tappen  
Married Elizabeth Young in 1856  
Married Agnes Melbrose  
Married Zella Allen  
Died September 1889 in Provo.

Eliza Smith, born September 10, 1815, in New Jersey. She died young, September 15, 1840.

Clarissa Tappen, daughter of George Tappen and Sarah Drew Tappen. Born November 24, 1824, in Pompton, New Jersey. Died January 1914, at Midway.

Elizabeth Young, married in 1856.

John Halmah, by trade, was a carpenter, cabinetmaker, mill wright, wheel wright, and skilled mechanic.

He married five women, and from these marriages had nineteen children.

Eliza died while her children were very young, leaving John to care for the children.

He met Clarissa Tappen in Pompton, New Jersey.

Clarissa and John Halmah were married by a Dutch Reform Minister by the name of Doolittle. After they came to Utah they had their endowments in Salt Lake.

They first heard Mormonism at a meet-

ing in Meads Basin near Pompton, New Jersey. They were baptized in 1842. Shortly after, they moved to Nauvoo.

While in Nauvoo, they helped in the activities of the Church. They were acquainted with the Prophet Joseph Smith and his wife, Emma. Clarissa visited in their home frequently.

Before leaving New Jersey they sold their property. They gave \$500.00 to the church as their contribution to help finance the immigrants.

They moved from Nauvoo to Winter Quarters in David Wood's Company.

They returned to Iowa to secure an outfit with which to continue the journey to Salt Lake valley. At Honey Creek, Iowa, he built a grist mill.

A daughter, Hester, became very ill and died. Her father made a casket of shingles and her mother made her clothes. With sad hearts they laid her to rest under a chestnut tree.

In the meantime, his father and mother who had accompanied them to Winter Quarters became ill with cholera and died. There were 600 of the Saints who died of the disease at that time. This was during the year 1847. John Halmah and his brother-in-law, Jno. Fairbanks made coffins from their wagon box and laid them to rest.

Before leaving New Jersey they sent many of their belongings with Samuel Brannon around Cape Hope to San Francisco, California. With them was a small grist mill John Halmah had made. The goods were to be transported overland to Salt Lake. They never saw any of those things again.

Clarissa said that they were often very weary from traveling, but when the evening meal was over and the children were in bed they sang and danced. Her favorite song, "Come, Come, Ye Saints," gave them the courage that no other song did. It buoyed them up until the journey's end. They arrived in Salt Lake September 20, 1852.

In 1856 he married his third wife, Elizabeth Young. Seven children were born to them.

His fourth wife was Agnes Melbrose, and his fifth wife was Zella Allen. Neither of these wives had children.

John Halmah built flour mills at Fort Supply, Fort Bridger, at Payson for Charles B. Hancock, at Provo for Joseph Kelton (this was later known as the Tanner Mills), at Mt. Pleasant, and one at Midway.

In 1861 he moved his families to Midway to the lower settlement. It was here that he built the first grist mill in the county. He hauled the granite from American Fork, using two yokes of oxen. It was a long, slow journey with the heavy granite. He used a hammer and chisel to carve the mill wheel and make it round.

This same wheel is now on the top of the Daughters of the Pioneers monument in Midway.

They lived in the fort at Midway when the Indians became troublesome.

While living in Midway he helped build homes. At this time he paid one dollar and twenty cents a pound for nails. He built a home for President Hatch at Heber. He also made furniture for this home. He furnished his wives' homes with furniture he had made.

On several occasions he furnished oxen and wagons to bring immigrants from the Missouri River to Utah. He not only designed and made furniture but he built many wagons.

John Halmah and his sons, David, William and Henry, were musicians. John Halmah and David furnished music for dances in the early days. He made a musical instrument called the dulcimer.

He was a friend to the Indians. They would do anything for him. He was a kind, good father to his families, and was a good neighbor. He was a member of the High Priest Quorum and died faithful to the gospel.

Clarissa's home at first was a log room with an attic above. She had many mouths to feed but did this by cooking her meals on a griddle bake oven and by hanging kettles over a fireplace. Food was scarce, but the boys helped by catching fish.

She sewed and worked by candle light. Sewing was all done by hand.

With all the hardships she never complained. She was always jovial and happy. She had a strong testimony of the truthfulness of the gospel.

She taught the gospel to her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. She was a loving, kind mother and neighbor. She was hospitable and charitable.

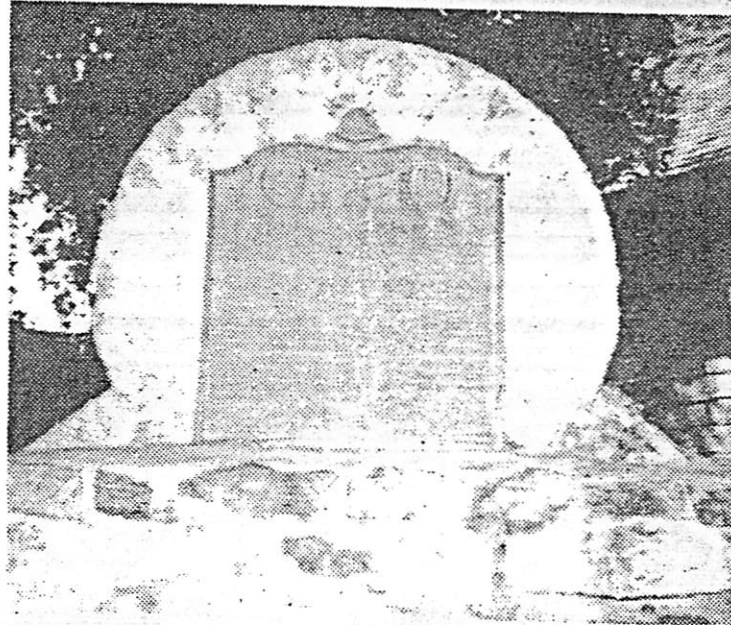
Her mind was keen to the very last. She enjoyed living. She lived to be 90 years, two months and ten days old.

Children of John Halmah Van Wagoner and Eliza Smith:

David, married Julia Provost  
Mrs. Alfred (Mary) Newell  
Children of John Halmah Van Wagoner and Clarissa Tappen:  
Ephraim, married Catherine Hamilton  
Hester, died in childhood  
John, married Margaret Faucett  
Mrs. Joseph (Ann) Bagley  
Mrs. Everice (Cynthia) Bronson  
William—Lelia Alexander—Nora Jacques  
Mrs. David (Clarissa) Provost  
Henry did not marry  
Orson died in infancy  
George, married Eva Bunnell  
Children of John Halmah Van Wagoner and Elizabeth Young:  
John Alfred, married Sarah Stark  
Franklin Douglas, married Mary Hansen  
Mrs. Joshua (Mary) Graves  
Mrs. Richard (Elizabeth A.) Sutton  
Mrs. Eugene (Stella Jane) Titus  
Parley Pratt, married Mary Jones  
Mrs. John D. (Lilly Maud) Fisher.

# HISTORICAL POINTS OF INTEREST IN MIDWAY

*Recorded by Reed Kohler about 1955 or 56  
At the home of George W. Johnson*



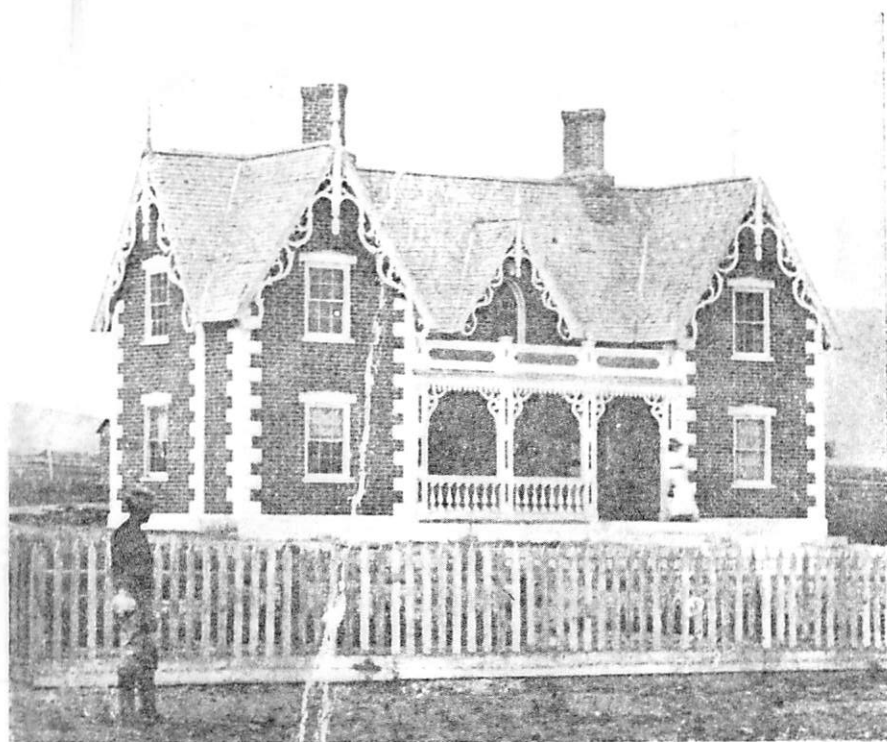
*The Mill Stone on the D.U.P. Monument*

## THE MILL STONE OF THE D.U.P MONUMENT

The Daughters of the Pioneer Monument is on the northeast corner of the public square. A large round stone topping the monument is of interest. If you notice it is carved out for the purpose of grinding flour and had a companion stone which in the years past was broken. It was located in its years of service, down in the Old Mill Lane on Snake Creek where it helped to grind the flour for the early settlers of Midway. I've been told by people who look at it that much of the stone must have ground off into the flour at times, and I tell the people on the tour that is one reason why the pioneers had so much grit.

---





The first brick home in Wasatch County as it was built by Bishop John Watkins in 1868. Hand pressed brick were used, with white sand stone corners. Woodwork on the outside was by Moroni Blood, a Swiss immigrant. Timber and lumber used throughout the home was milled and planed by Henry Coleman Sr. John Watkins, who built the home, had come to Midway from England where he was a noted architect.

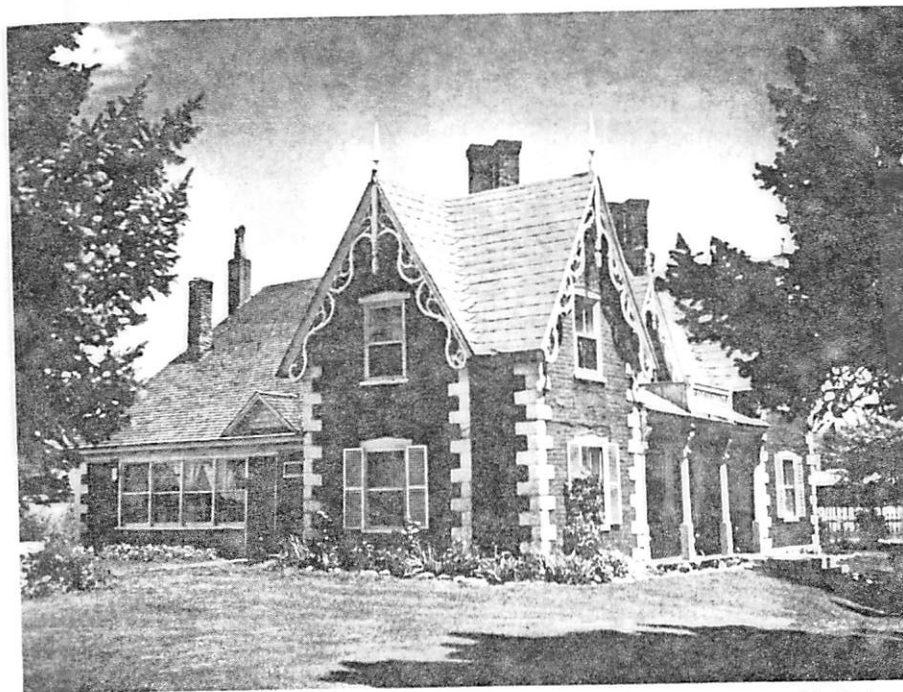
### GRIST MILLS

Milling was one of the first industries in the Midway area, having its beginning in 1861 when John H. Van Wagoner built the first mill on the old Wood's Farm, known as the Fred Price home site.

The enterprising Mr. Van Wagoner had only been in Midway for about a year when he sensed the need of the people for a mill. He brought the first mill stone to the town by ox team and shaped the stone with hammer and chisel.

Sidney Epperson records in his journal the delight of the people with Mr. Van Wagoner's mill. After stating that the people could now have flour ground, and grain prepared for their cattle, Mr. Epperson wrote "This mill was indeed a blessing for the settlers."

In recent years the stone from this first mill has been placed atop a monument on the Post Office corner by the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers.



The home as it has been preserved today by the family of Bishop Henry T. Coleman who purchased the property in 1904. The traditional English landscaping and the flavor of the original architecture make it one of the scenic attractions in the entire valley.

Early millers of Midway included George Bonner, James Ross, a Mr. Saxey, Brigham Mulliner, Hyrum Horner Dennis, Mark Jeffs and Mr. John Van Wagoner.

The major mill in Midway had its beginnings in 1893 when Mark Jeffs built a large, four-story grist mill on the east side of Midway near the Provo River. This mill was capable of producing 50 barrels of flour every 24 hours. Water from Provo River powered the mill, which was the first roller mill in the county. An additional source of water was the Birkumshaw Springs, about a mile and a half above the mill. Water was stored in a large pond overnight and then used as desired during the day.

Because Mr. Jeffs hired transient millers to operate his mill, the venture failed to succeed and was closed in 1900.

However, Nels Joseph Johnson, a young miller, and native of Wasatch County, purchased the mill in 1903 and started operating it again. Mr. Johnson had been working for Abram Hatch in the Heber Flour Mills, but moved his wife and family to Midway as soon as he purchased the mill. He is reported to have paid Mr. Jeffs \$10,000 for the facility.

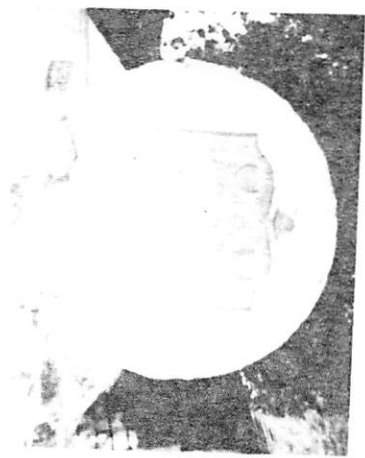
Through the years the mill has been successfully managed by Mr. Johnson and his sons. During World War I it ran at full capacity producing flour for the government. Most of this production was shipped to Houston, Texas. Flour was also shipped to San Francisco during the tragic earthquake of 1906.

Improvements made at the mill during the years included cleaning machines for the wheat, chopping facilities and flour bleaching equipment. Hundreds of tons of wheat were also stored in the mill.

For many years the mill was operated under the name of Peoples Roller Mills, and then later the Johnson Milling Company. When Mr. Johnson died in 1950, his son, Ralph J. Johnson took over the management. The mill is now the property of the Liffert Manufacturing Co. It is under the management of Henry Liffert. The company makes small metal tools.

## HISTORICAL POINTS OF INTEREST IN MIDWAY

*Recorded by Reed Kohler about 1955 or 56  
At the home of George W. Johnson*



*The Mill Stone on the D.U.P. Monument*

### THE MILL STONE OF THE D.U.P. MONUMENT

The Daughters of the Pioneer Monument is on the northeast corner of the public square. A large round stone topping the monument is of interest. If you notice it is carved out for the purpose of grinding flour and had a companion stone which in the years past was broken. It was located in its years of service, down in the Old Mill Lane on Snake Creek where it helped to grind the flour for the early settlers of Midway. I've been told by people who look at it that much of the stone must have ground off into the flour at times, and I tell the people on the tour that is one reason why the pioneers had so much grit.

### GOLD IN MIDWAY?

Up over the mound on to the west slope of Midway there are two mine dumps on the side of the mountain in view of the town of Midway. The first one was dug by a man by the name of Sam Boyd under the direction of Benny Clark. There was an ancient story repeated of Spaniards who came into the area in the early years prior to pioneer time. And the story indicated that they found gold in almost pure form in the proximity of these mines. However none of the white settlers ever located the supposed mines but various people through dreams indicated where they might be. And so both of these diggings have been prompted largely through dreams. The Benny Clark mine was dug in the early 1900's and proved entirely fruitless. The other slightly to the right was dug by Nobel Snyder. It was prompted to a greater extent by a friend geologist who indicated he was quite certain there was gold in that area.

Some years ago, a certain geologist from Philadelphia College indicated to Reed Kohler that on his farm, which is adjacent to these mines, that he felt quite sure the diggings were prompted by real fact because he felt sure that formation was indicative of gold. However none has ever been discovered.

# JOHN HALMAH VAN WAGONER JR. AND CLARISSA TAPPEN VAN WAGONER



Son of Halmah I. Van Wagoner and Mary Van Houten Van Wagoner.

Born September 1, 1811, at Wanague, New Jersey.

Married Eliza Smith

Married Clarissa Tappen

Married Elizabeth Young in 1856

Married Agnes Melbrose

Married Zella Allen

Died September 1889 in Provo.

Eliza Smith, born September 10, 1815, in New Jersey. She died young, September 15, 1840.

Clarissa Tappen, daughter of George Tappen and Sarah Drew Tappen. Born November 24, 1824, in Pompton, New Jersey. Died January 1914, at Midway.

Elizabeth Young, married in 1856.

John Halmah, by trade, was a carpenter, cabinetmaker, mill wright, wheel wright, and skilled mechanic.

He married five women, and from these marriages had nineteen children.

Eliza died while her children were very young, leaving John to care for the children.

He met Clarissa Tappen in Pompton, New Jersey.

Clarissa and John Halmah were married by a Dutch Reform Minister by the name of Doolittle. After they came to Utah they had their endowments in Salt Lake.

They first heard Mormonism at a meet-

ing in Meads Basin near Pompton, New Jersey. They were baptized in 1842. Shortly after, they moved to Nauvoo.

While in Nauvoo, they helped in the activities of the Church. They were acquainted with the Prophet Joseph Smith and his wife, Emma. Clarissa visited in their home frequently.

Before leaving New Jersey they sold their property. They gave \$500.00 to the church as their contribution to help finance the immigrants.

They moved from Nauvoo to Winter Quarters in David Wood's Company.

They returned to Iowa to secure an outfit with which to continue the journey to Salt Lake valley. At Honey Creek, Iowa, he built a grist mill.

A daughter, Hester, became very ill and died. Her father made a casket of shingles and her mother made her clothes. With sad hearts they laid her to rest under a chestnut tree.

In the meantime, his father and mother who had accompanied them to Winter Quarters became ill with cholera and died. There were 600 of the Saints who died of the disease at that time. This was during the year 1847. John Halmah and his brother-in-law, Jno. Fairbanks made coffins from their wagon box and laid them to rest.

Before leaving New Jersey they sent many of their belongings with Samuel Brannon around Cape Hope to San Francisco, California. With them was a small grist mill John Halmah had made. The goods were to be transported overland to Salt Lake. They never saw any of those things again.

Clarissa said that they were often very weary from traveling, but when the evening meal was over and the children were in bed they sang and danced. Her favorite song, "Come, Come, Ye Saints," gave them the courage that no other song did. It buoyed them up until the journey's end. They arrived in Salt Lake September 20, 1852.

In 1856 he married his third wife, Elizabeth Young. Seven children were born to them.

His fourth wife was Agnes Melbrose, and his fifth wife was Zella Allen. Neither of these wives had children.

John Halmah built flour mills at Fort Supply, Fort Bridger, at Payson for Charles B. Hancock, at Provo for Joseph Kelton (this was later known as the Tanner Mills), at Mt. Pleasant, and one at Midway.

In 1861 he moved his families to Midway to the lower settlement. It was here that he built the first grist mill in the county. He hauled the granite from American Fork, using two yokes of oxen. It was a long, slow journey with the heavy granite. He used a hammer and chisel to carve the mill wheel and make it round.

This same wheel is now on the top of the Daughters of the Pioneers monument in Midway.

They lived in the fort at Midway when the Indians became troublesome.

While living in Midway he helped build homes. At this time he paid one dollar and twenty cents a pound for nails. He built a home for President Hatch at Heber. He also made furniture for this home. He furnished his wives' homes with furniture he had made.

On several occasions he furnished oxen and wagons to bring immigrants from the Missouri River to Utah. He not only designed and made furniture but he built many wagons.

John Halmah and his sons, David, William and Henry, were musicians. John Halmah and David furnished music for dances in the early days. He made a musical instrument called the dulcimer.

He was a friend to the Indians. They would do anything for him. He was a kind, good father to his families, and was a good neighbor. He was a member of the High Priest Quorum and died faithful to the gospel.

Clarissa's home at first was a log room with an attic above. She had many mouths to feed but did this by cooking her meals on a griddle bake oven and by hanging kettles over a fireplace. Food was scarce, but the boys helped by catching fish.

She sewed and worked by candle light. Sewing was all done by hand.

With all the hardships she never complained. She was always jovial and happy. She had a strong testimony of the truthfulness of the gospel.

She taught the gospel to her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. She was a loving, kind mother and neighbor. She was hospitable and charitable.

Her mind was keen to the very last. She enjoyed living. She lived to be 90 years, two months and ten days old.

Children of John Halmah Van Wagoner and Eliza Smith:

David, married Julia Provost  
Mrs. Alfred (Mary) Newell  
Children of John Halmah Van Wagoner and Clarissa Tappen:

Ephraim, married Catherine Hamilton  
Hester, died in childhood

John, married Margaret Faucett

Mrs. Joseph (Ann) Bagley

Mrs. Everice (Cynthia) Bronson

William—Lelia Alexander—Nora Jacques

Mrs. David (Clarissa) Provost

Henry did not marry

Orson died in infancy

George, married Eva Bunnell

Children of John Halmah Van Wagoner and Elizabeth Young:

John Alfred, married Sarah Stark

Franklin Douglas, married Mary Hansen

Mrs. Joshua (Mary) Graves

Mrs. Richard (Elizabeth A.) Sutton

Mrs. Eugene (Stella Jane) Titus

Parley Pratt, married Mary Jones

Mrs. John D. (Lilly Maud) Fisher.

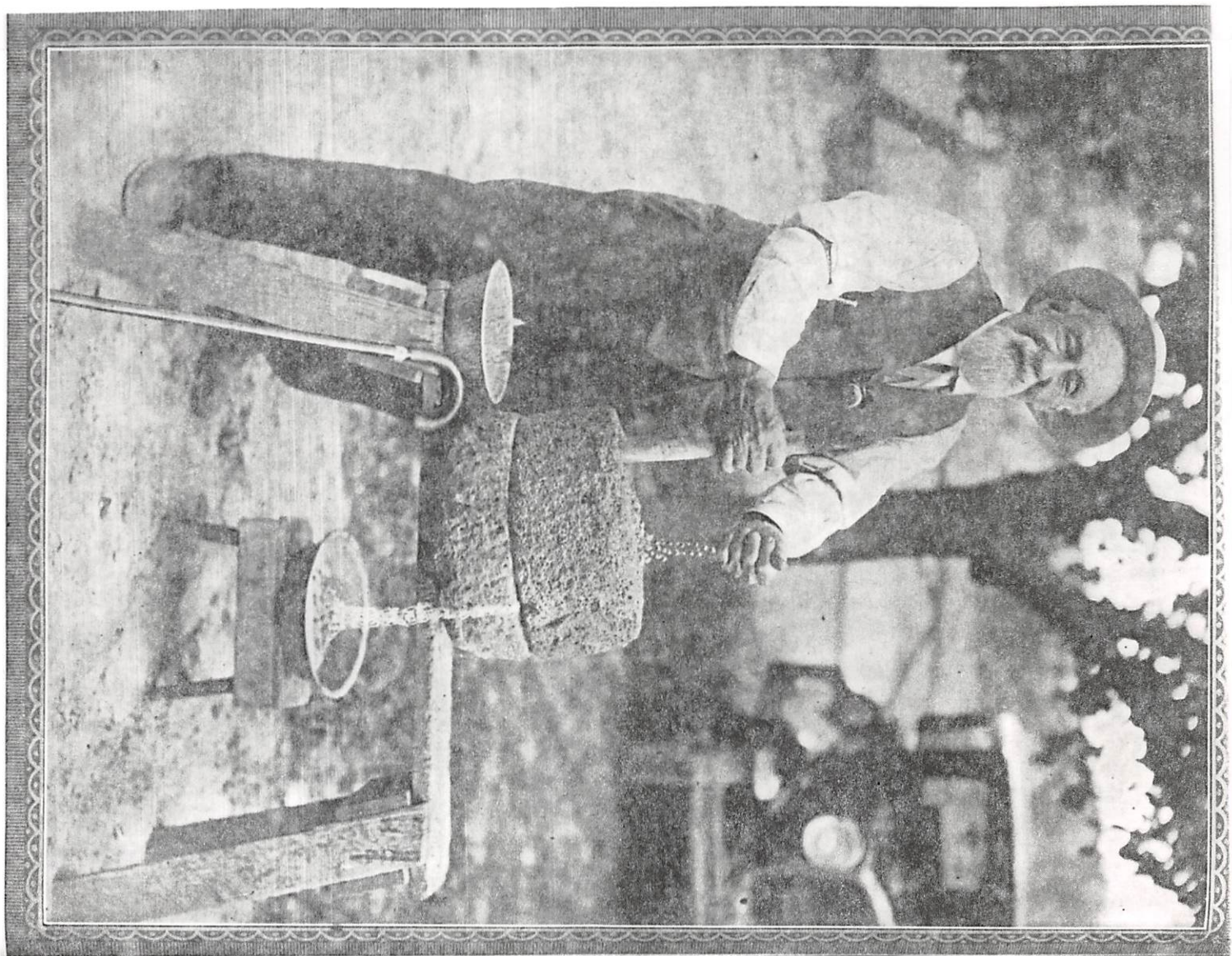


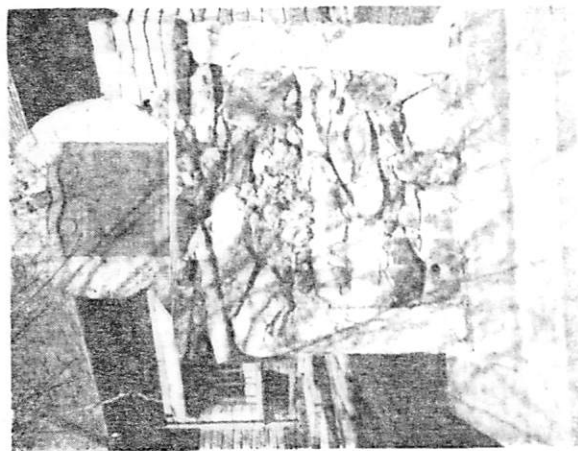


John Halmah Van Wagoner Grist Mill

John  
Van Wag  
Grist  
Mill  
on  
Fred  
Price  
Farm

one  
method  
of  
grinding  
↖





The Midway Fort Monument, Midway. The inscription reads: "Daughters of Utah Pioneers No. 59. Erected July 21, 1940. Midway Fort. When this valley was settled in 1859 two colonies were established on the West side of the Provo River. A lower and upper settlement, the latter called Mound City. In 1866 Indian depredations caused the formation of the Wasatch County Military District and brought the people of the two settlements together for security. About seventy-five families erected homes on this site. Sidney H. Epperson was the presiding elder. The location being midway between the two sites, by common usage became Midway."